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For Immediate release - February 03, 2012

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR MURRAY LAUNCHES TOUR OF MILITARY BASES TO UNIFY SUPPORT FOR MASSACHUSETTS MILITARY JOBS AND INVESTMENTS

Lieutenant Governor announces agreement to encourage regional partners, federal, state and local officials to protect and promote military sites across the state



Lieutenant Governor Murray visits with troops at Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield. View additional [photos](#).

WESTFIELD – Friday, February 3, 2012 – Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray today launched a tour of military bases across the Commonwealth to build grassroots support to protect the missions, jobs and economic investments associated with the bases. At Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield, Lieutenant Governor Murray also announced the Administration's new "Military and Community Enterprise Agreement" which communities and local officials can sign in solidarity to commit their local support for these military sites.

"Through proactive planning, Massachusetts has and will continue to position the state to protect our military bases," said Lieutenant Governor Murray, chair of the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services. "The Department of Defense has outlined projected budget cuts over the next 10 years that could impact Massachusetts bases. The strong military presence and related defense industry in our Commonwealth are critical to our economy and our residents. The Patrick-Murray Administration will work tirelessly with our federal partners to keep Massachusetts military bases open and their missions intact."

Lieutenant Governor Murray plans to visit at least six of the state's military bases. In addition to Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield, the Lieutenant Governor will visit Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford; Westover Air Reserve Base in Chicopee; Massachusetts Military Reservation / Otis Air National Guard Base in Falmouth; Natick Soldier Systems Center in Natick; and Fort

Devens.

As a result of federal deficit reduction negotiations, the U.S. Department of Defense created a plan to reduce federal defense spending by approximately \$500 billion over the next decade. The Department of Defense explained that cuts would be achieved in part by reducing total force numbers and relying on technological advances to build a more streamlined military. The Pentagon will also request that Congress authorize a Base Realignment and Consolidation Commission (BRAC) to recommend the closure or consolidation of select military bases across the country.

Today's tour kickoff follows a series of planning meetings that Lieutenant Governor Murray has held over the last year in anticipation of a BRAC round. The meetings have included the Massachusetts National Guard, MassDevelopment, cabinet secretaries and most recently the Massachusetts High Technology Council and the Defense Technology Initiative. During the visit at Barnes Air National Guard Base, Lieutenant Governor Murray was joined by chamber of commerce and local business leaders, education officials, municipal leaders, state agency staff and veterans' services providers to plan the Commonwealth's response to potential federal budget cuts. Lieutenant Governor Murray outlined plans for these community partners to join the Patrick-Murray Administration by signing a Military and Community Enterprise Agreement to unify efforts to promote, protect, and expand each base in the Commonwealth.

"We don't know whether there will be another BRAC review, but forewarned is forearmed," said Senator John Kerry. "That's why we're already prepping to get way ahead of things with a game plan. I'm grateful to the Lieutenant Governor for taking an active role. He knows first-hand the critical role that the 104th Fighter Wing at Barnes Airport plays in our strategic security. I'm not shy about pressing our case and I'm going to keep meeting and talking and preparing and I'll be prepared to go toe to toe with the facts."

"Barnes Air National Guard Base is an outstanding facility that not only provides jobs that are integral to our regional economy but also a service that is critical to our nation's security," said Congressman John Olver. "Over \$45 million in federal funding has been invested in the base over the last decade and it has clearly been money well spent. The base serves as an anchor to tax-generating related industries such as Gulfstream Aerospace, who recently committed to the construction of a \$23 million maintenance facility right next door."

During his tour of Massachusetts military bases, Lieutenant Governor Murray will highlight recent initiatives in support of the state's veterans and defense industry. As part of the Patrick-Murray Administration's proposed FY 2013 budget, Lieutenant Governor Murray recently announced an \$11.25 million increased funding for vital veterans' services, including workforce training. The defense industry and its workforce is also a major part of Massachusetts' economy with thousands of employees working at the state's military bases and over \$14 billion in defense contracts awarded to Massachusetts firms in 2010.

"Lieutenant Governor Murray's tour of the Commonwealth's military bases reflects this Administration's commitment to supporting veterans, protecting the Massachusetts economy and keeping our communities safe," said Coleman Nee, Secretary of Veterans' Services. "Massachusetts' military installations provide jobs for veterans and the surrounding community, as well as provide essential services that veterans cannot access elsewhere. As the number of veterans continues to rise, these installations are a vital link between veterans and the vital services they deserve."

"I commend Lieutenant Governor Murray for taking the initiative to bring together business, education, government, and the community to support the important relationship that Massachusetts has with the defense industry," said Jack Wilson, chairman of the Defense Technology Initiative. "Massachusetts is home to a large number of jobs that directly and indirectly relate to the defense industry, and forging this partnership on the community level is critical to the Commonwealth and nation's economic and military security."

"The Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce is very pleased to be included in the roundtable discussion with Lieutenant Governor Murray and other business and community partners," said Kate Phelon, executive director of the Greater Westfield Chamber of Commerce. "The Air National Guard Base in Westfield has a vital role in our community, for economic reasons as well as homeland security on the east coast. The Air National Guard has always been a great partner to the City of Westfield and losing this base would be detrimental to our local economy and security. We truly hope the powers in Washington will see the economic and community value this base brings to Western Massachusetts."

Since 2007, Lieutenant Governor Murray has led the Governor's Advisory Council on Veterans' Services and today's announcement tour builds on the Administration's commitment to the Massachusetts veterans' community, our regional economies, and the state's defense industry. To learn more about the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to Massachusetts veterans, visit www.mass.gov/veterans.

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